THE DARK AVENGER VS. THE CHICAGO MOB!
THE Shadow STRIKES!
DC
SHADOW STRIKES
14
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by
Gerard Jones
&
Eduardo Barreto

It all comes down to keeping appointments.
Tad Romanowski kept his when he turned his dead daddy's business over to the mobsters who'd killed him.
Half-Step Sbarbarro kept his, and he didn't even know he had one.
SBARBARRO'S FLOWERS
ROMANOWSKI. DON'T ASK ME HOW TO SPELL IT.
AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT..
...SEND SOME FLOWERS TO MISS MALLOY.
THE USUAL BOUQUET?
UNH-UH. A FUNERAL WREATH.
A...? BUT MISS MALLOY ISN'T... DEAD? SHE WAS SUCH A HEALTHY GIRL...
TOO HEALTHY. SEND THE WREATH.
MISTER SBARBARRO ...YOUR KNUCKLES. YOU DIDN'T...
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS ABOUT MY KNUCKLES!
PAP!

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JUST SEND THE WREATH.
AND SEND A BOUQUET TO MISS ALLEN, OVER AT GEORGIE'S CLUB. SEND IT..."FROM A SECRET ADMIRER."
OKAY, HALF-STEP.
YOU'RE COMING WITH US.
WELL. HIYA, LOU.
HOW YOU DOING, LOU? HOW'S YOUR WIFE?
STILL GOT THAT CUTE LITTLE PLACE OVER ON LAKESHORE DRIVE, LOU? THAT'S A NICE PLACE YOU GOT.
NICE. FAMILY.
HALF-STEP ...FOR GOD'S SAKE! I'M JUST DOING MY JOB!
MISTER GUZIK WANTS TO SEE YOU... THAT'S ALL.

DON'T FEED ME THAT! STANNY'S DEAD--AND HARELIP'S IN THE HOSPITAL--
--BECAUSE SOMEBODY... SOMEBODY IN YOUR CAR OPENED FIRE ON ME!

I TELL YOU, JAKE... SOMEBODY STOLE MY CAR.

STOLE YOUR CAR. THE TOUGHEST TORPEDO IN CHICAGO AND SOMEBODY STEALS YOUR CAR.
NOW YOU TELL ME, HALF-STEP... WHO'S SO CRAZY?
I DON'T KNOW, JAKE.
BUT WHEN I CATCH HIM, MAYBE I'LL DO A LITTLE BRAIN SURGERY.

YOU WON'T WIN, HALF-STEP! YOU HEAR ME?
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE ME AND MY METHODS! YOU AND YOUR BUTCHER-BOYS, ACTING LIKE IT'S STILL PRO-HIBITION-- YOU WON'T WIN!
I'M TAKING A WALK INTO THE FUTURE, HALF-STEP!

I'M GOING TO THE MEAT-PACKING PLANT THAT I GOT FOR US.
YOU'RE GOOD AT SIGNING PAPERS, GUZIK.
BUT WHO PUSHED THE OLD MAN INTO THE VAT?

YOU WON'T CUT IN ON ME, HALF-STEP. NITTI AND ME ARE GONNA SEE TO THAT.

SLAM!

Everybody was keeping his dates right on time. Everybody was playing his part--just like HE wanted it.

HAHAHA HAHAHAHA

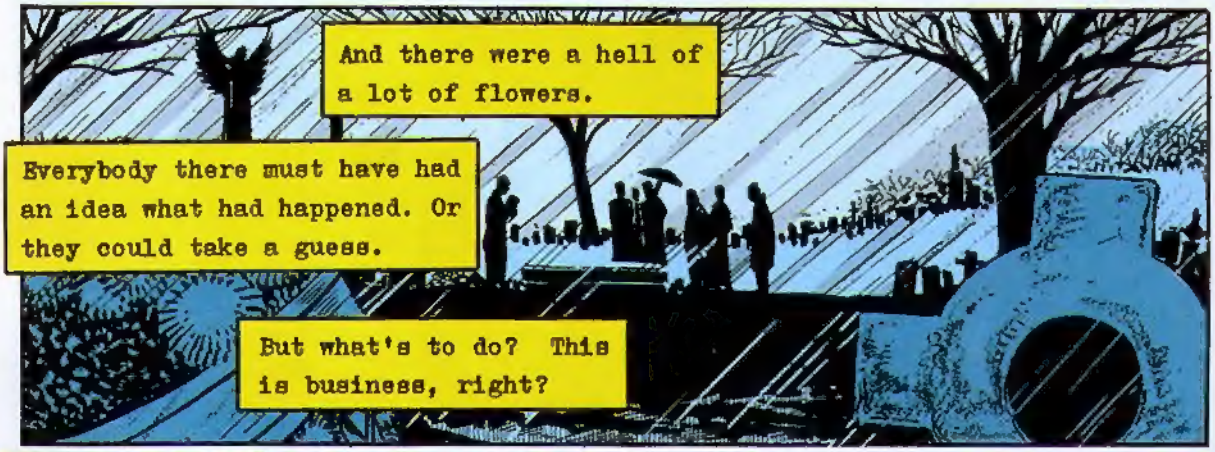
And me? I've got an appointment of my own coming up. That's why I want to get this down fast, just so somebody can know what happened, can know why the streets of Chicago turned into...

BLOOD GUTTERS

Gerard Jones, writer Eduardo Barreto, artist
John Workman, letterer Anthony Tollin, colorist
Brian Augustyn, editor

BRENDA, YOU CAN'T SPURN ME NOW. NOT NOW, IN MY BEREAVEMENT.
DEAR LORD, BRENDA ... I'M GOING TO BURY MY FATHER TODAY!
AND WHY, TAD? WHY ARE YOU BURYING HIM?
BECAUSE OF YOUR GAMBLING! BECAUSE YOU GAVE YOUR FATHER'S FACTORY TO THOSE ... TO THOSE...
YOU'RE WRONG, BRENDA! I RUN THAT FACTORY!
LIKE A PUPPET RUNS THE STAGE.
AND WHO ARE YOU?
I'M BRENDA'S FAIRY GODMOTHER. I'M IN CHARGE OF TURNING HER PUMPKIN INTO A COACH!
PITY I CAN'T TURN HER FIANCÉ INTO A MAN.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS!
WELL, I HOPE YOU FIND A NICE--GENTEEL--ANGLO SAXON BOY TO MARRY, SOMEONE YOUR FATHER WILL APPROVE OF!
SLAM
OH, TAD... OH, POOR, SICK TAD...
6

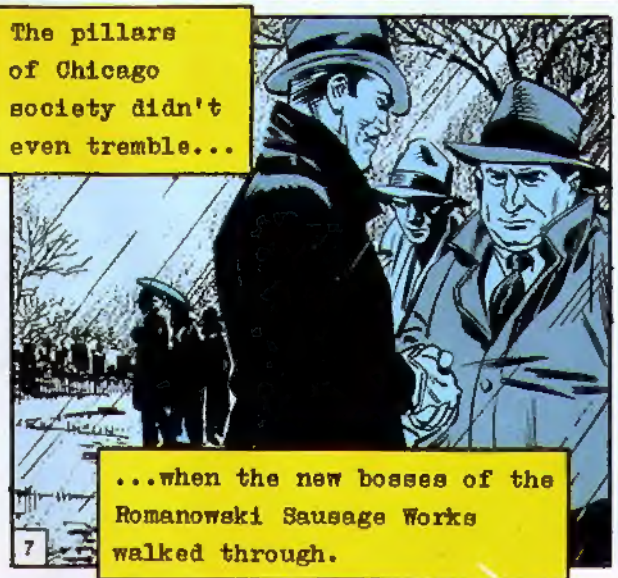
Stanislaus Romanowski kept his last date. All the best people were there to see him.



And there were a hell of a lot of flowers.

Everybody there must have had an idea what had happened. Or they could take a guess.

But what's to do? This is business, right?

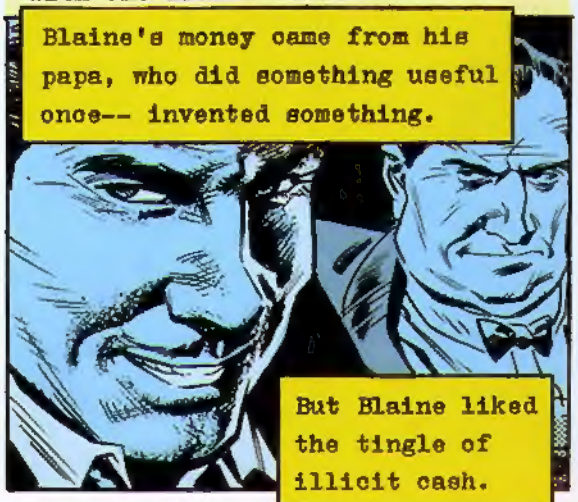


The pillars of Chicago society didn't even tremble...

...when the new bosses of the Romanowski Sausage Works walked through.

Jake Guzik was especially popular with one Blaine Harte.

Blaine's money came from his papa, who did something useful once-- invented something.



But Blaine liked the tingle of illicit cash.

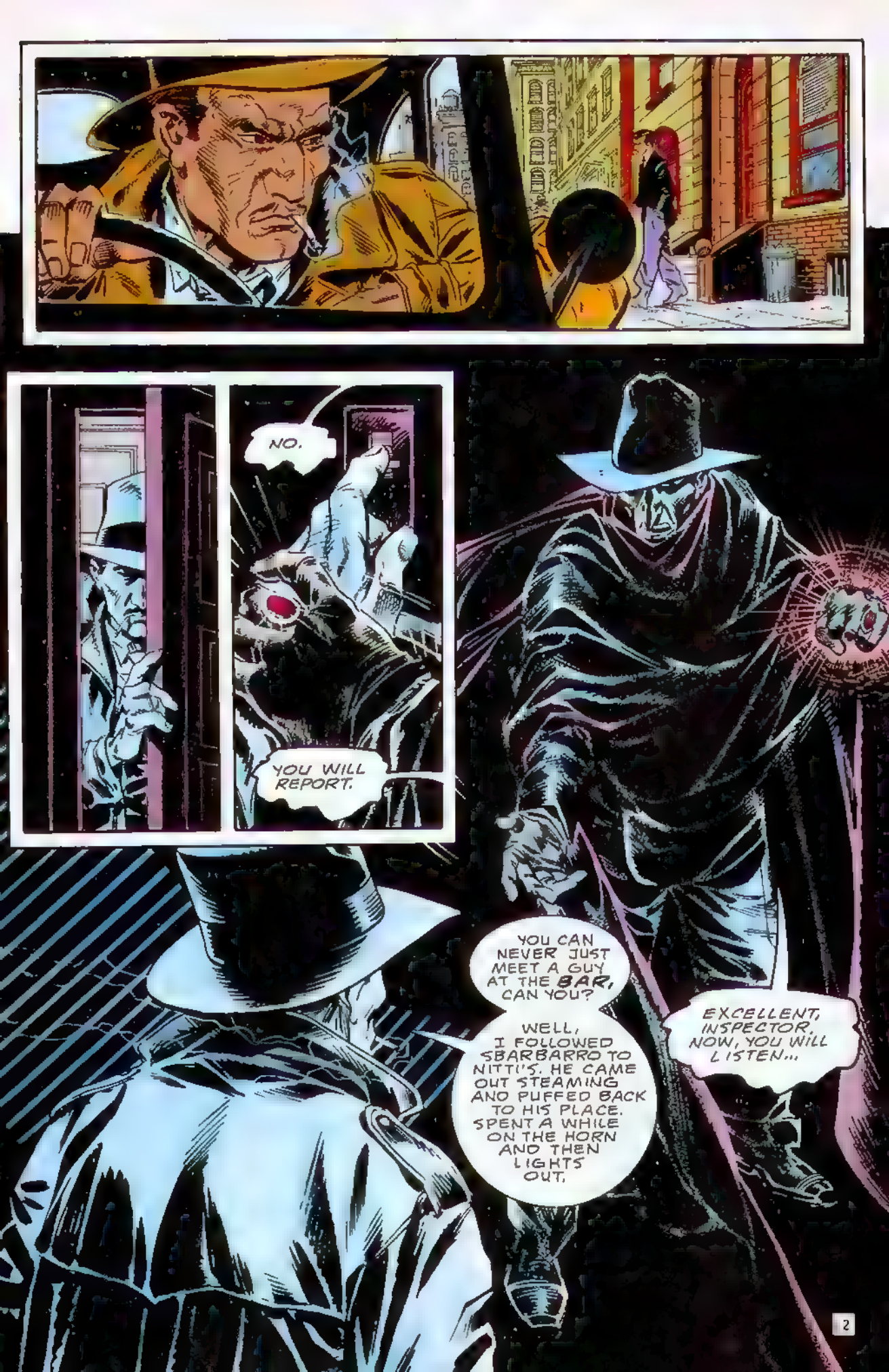
Liked it almost as much as he liked chorus girls.
It was natural they ended up at one of Guzik's investments—Georgie Katomeris's nightclub and gambling dive.
I got in on a free pass from the crooner, Joey O'Hara. I told him I was the boy gonna make him the new Russ Colombo.
It looked like Guzik and Harte weren't going to serve up anything but champagne and stale girlie-stories.
Until THEY came in.
She was Brenda Shield—like the canned hams. The only one who'd seen the whole thing happen without getting dirty.
And him? Nobody knew who he was. But everybody was wondering.
8

He had them right where he wanted them.

He didn't spend much time getting settled--and noticed--before he started to move.

YEAH? AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
ONLY A FEW THINGS.
LIKE CHARLIE DOOHAN. DIED IN ST. LOUIS, 1928. ROGER HANRATTY, KANSAS CITY, 1929. BENNY CEMOLI, CHICAGO, 1931.
GIUSEPPE ORLANDO, CHICAGO, 1933. ANTON CERMAK, MIAMI, 1933...
...STANISLAUS ROMANOWSKI, CHICAGO, 1935.
WELL, IT WAS NICE CHATTING WITH YOU, MR. SBARBARRO. I'M SURE WE'LL MEET AGAIN. AND BY THE WAY...
...YOU MIGHT WANT TO WIPE OFF YOUR SHOES BEFORE YOU LEAVE.
He didn't have to walk by my table to get back to the girl.
I got the chills when he did. I didn't know why.
LAMONT CRANSTON CONGRESS HOTEL

WHO THE HELL IS LAMONT CRANSTON?
COMES OUT OF NOWHERE, GOT NEW YORK WRITTEN ALL OVER HIM, GIVING THE PLAY TO ROMANOWSKI'S OLD CHIPPIE--
I TELL YOU, HALF-STEP, I DON'T KNOW.
YEAH? WELL, GUZIK DOES!
I MEAN IT, NITTI --THIS BIMBO'S GUNNING FOR ME. GUZIK WANTS ME OUT!
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE THE ONE WANTS HIM OUT. THAT SHOOTING--
THAT WAS A FRAME-UP! YOU GOTTA KNOW THAT, FRANCESCO
THIS MOB IS SPLITTING. NOW'S THE TIME FOR THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO TAKE CONTROL.
BUT YOU GOTTA CHOOSE, FRATELLO.
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?
LEGGO MY TIE, ANTONIO.
I'M SORRY, FRANK. I'M SORRY THAT YOU MADE IT THIS WAY.

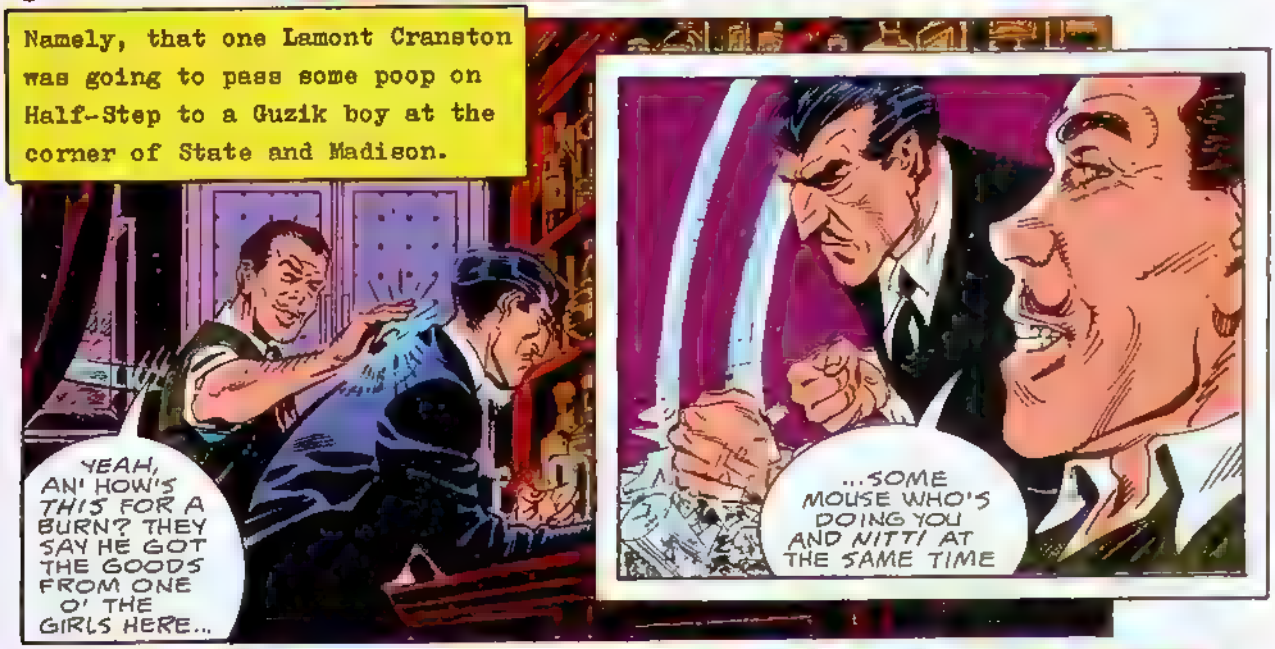

NO.
YOU WILL REPORT.
YOU CAN NEVER JUST MEET A GUY AT THE BAR, CAN YOU?
WELL, I FOLLOWED SBARBARRO TO NITTI'S. HE CAME OUT STEAMING AND PUFFED BACK TO HIS PLACE. SPENT A WHILE ON THE HORN AND THEN LIGHTS OUT.
EXCELLENT, INSPECTOR. NOW, YOU WILL LISTEN...

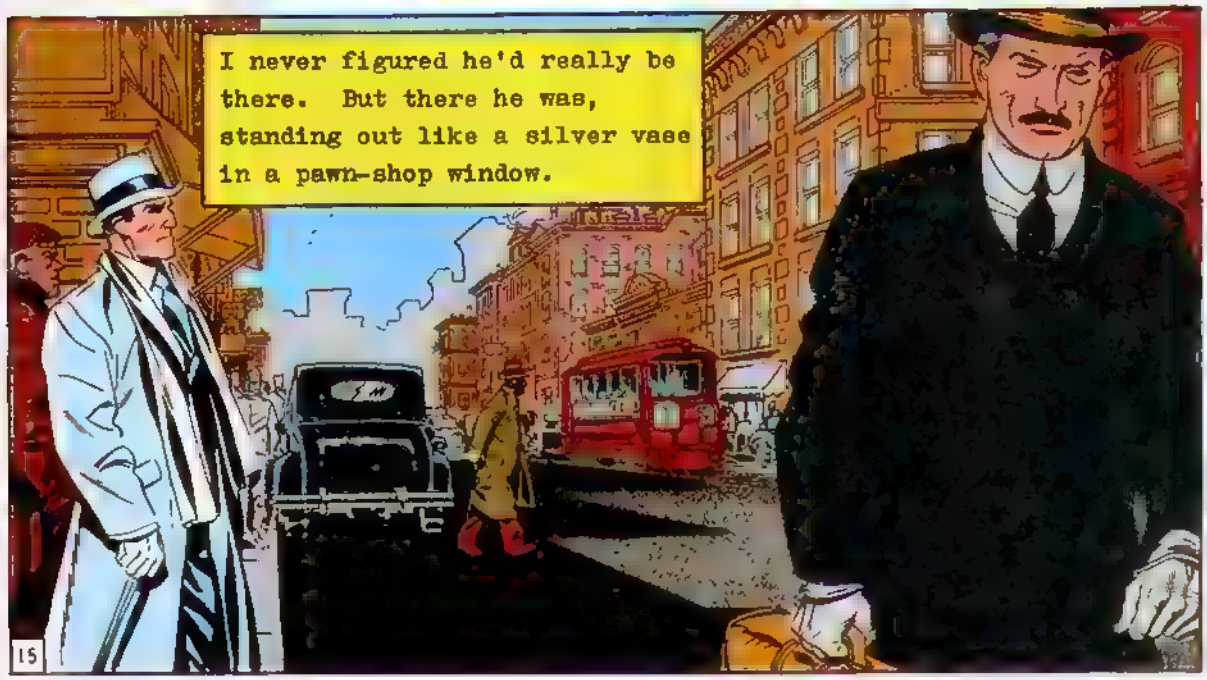
RAGE BOILS IN THE HEARTS OF GANGDOM. ANOTHER DAY OR TWO OF OUR HEAT... AND IT MUST EXPLODE.
YOU ARE TO LOCATE FRANK NITTI IN THE MORNING AND REPORT TO ME ON ALL HIS MOVEMENTS. I SHALL TAKE YOUR CALLS AT...
NO!
I'M A COP--DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS? I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR AGENTS. I HELP YOU WHEN WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE, WHEN WE'RE STOPPING CRIME--
--NOT WHEN WE'RE STIRRING IT UP!
THE EMPIRE OF CRIME IS TOO GREAT FOR US TO DESTROY, CARDONA. BUT IT IS A PRIMITIVE AND VIOLENT EMPIRE... AND CAN BE INDUCED TO DESTROY ITSELF.
NO. I DON'T LIKE THIS TOWN--BUT I WON'T TURN IT INTO A SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.
I WON'T HELP YOU KICK OFF A GANG WAR.
I SHALL ONLY CONTINUE... WITHOUT YOU.
THEN DO IT.
JUST DO IT.
WE WILL TEACH GANGLAND...THAT IN EXTENDING ITS GRASP, IT ONLY SEVERS ITS OWN LIMBS.

And then it was my turn. My FIRST appointment.
YOU'RE AN AMBITIOUS YOUNG REPORTER, MR. HECK. I WANT TO GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE YOURSELF.
YOU WILL SUBMIT A STORY CONCERNING THE MOB KILLING AT THE CORNER OF STATE AND MADISON STREETS...
WAIT A SEC. I DIDN'T HEAR ABOUT ANY KILLING AT--
BECAUSE IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET.
I ALSO WANT YOU TO GIVE THIS MESSAGE TO JOEY O'HARA, TO PASS ON TO HIS BOSSES.
HE'LL WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S IN IT FOR HIM.
AND WHAT DOES HE WANT?
A NIGHT-CLUB OF HIS OWN.
TELL HIM I CAN ARRANGE IT.
HOLD IT. MAYBE YOU DO KNOW CARDONA... BUT YOU'RE NO COP. I CAN SMELL COPS. WHAT ARE YOU?
I AM NOTHING YOU HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE, MR. HECK.
YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUDDY. I'VE MET EVERYTHING.
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU'VE MET WEALTHY DILETTANTES BY THE DOZEN AND DETECTIVES BY THE SCORE, THAT YOU'VE TALKED WITH EVERY BREED OF PARASITE AND VICTIM, THUG, AND PATSY.
BUT I AM SOMETHING YOU HAVE NEVER MET.
I AM SOMETHING OF WHICH YOU HAVE NEVER DREAMED.

I SUSPECT YOU WILL DO BEST TO LEAVE IT AT THAT.
YOU KNOW, MONTY... I SUSPECT YOU'RE RIGHT.

I bit the hook, like he knew I would, and made for my next appointment--
--to give him a message for Half-Step.


Namely, that one Lamont Cranston was going to pass some poop on Half-Step to a Guzik boy at the corner of State and Madison.
YEAH, AN' HOW'S THIS FOR A BURN? THEY SAY HE GOT THE GOODS FROM ONE O' THE GIRLS HERE...
...SOME MOUSE WHO'S DOING YOU AND NITTI AT THE SAME TIME


I never figured he'd really be there. But there he was, standing out like a silver vase in a pawn-shop window.

It was going to be a crowd hit. The smart mobsters'll tell you that that's the safest kind.
See, nobody's expecting it in the middle of a crowd...
...the mark's off his guard...
WAP
UHHH
...and everybody looks at the falling body.
AAAAAA
Nobody even notices the killer.
BLAM
CRIMINY!
HELLO, SWEETHEART? GIVE ME REWRITE!
16

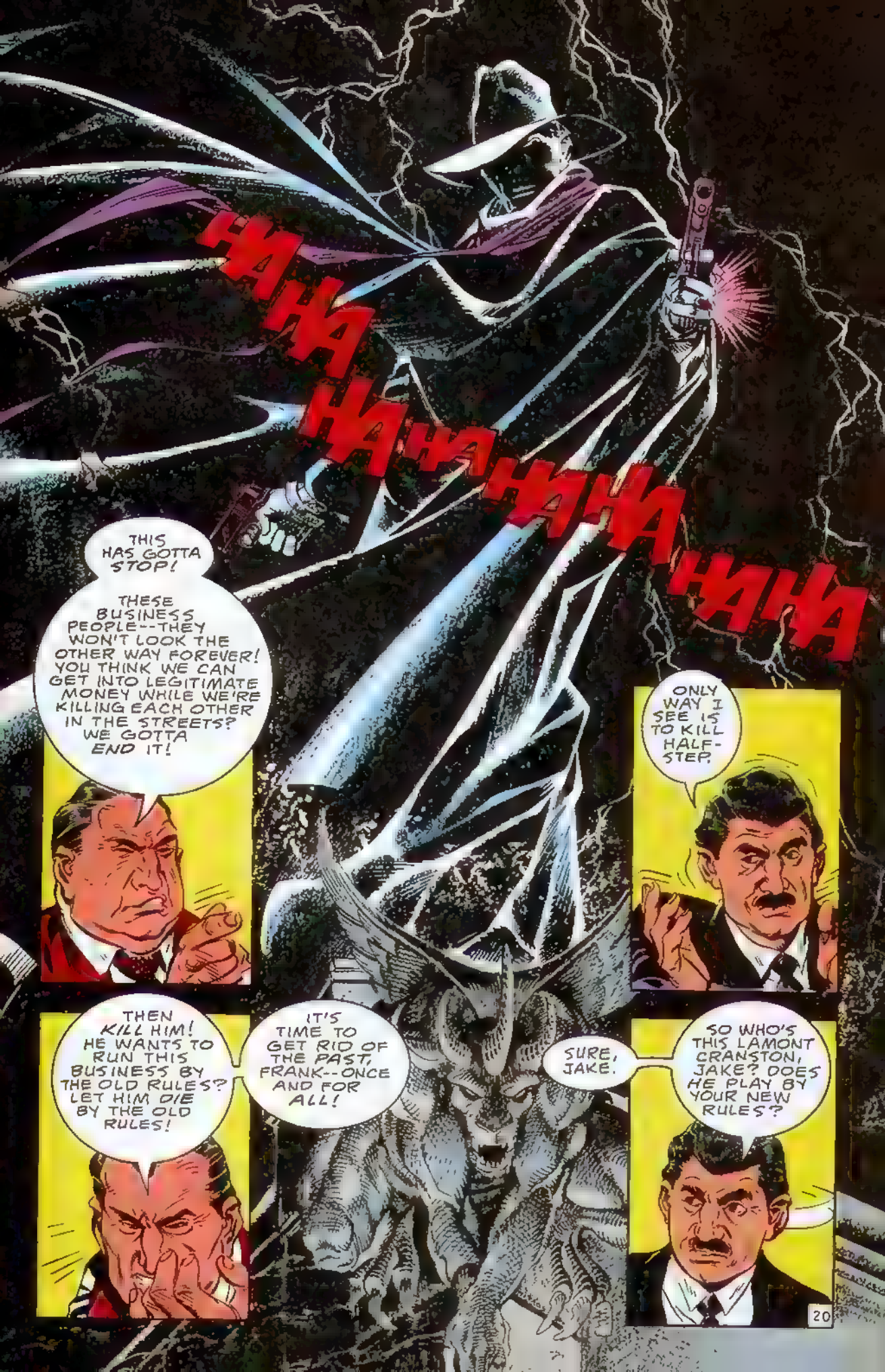
Chicago Herald and Examiner
MOB WAR FLARES AGAIN
CHICK HECK, C.N.S.
Riccardo Mustacho, reputed gangland torpedo, was murdered today in a "hit" rumored to have been ordered by Frank Nitti. The kill-

RRRRRR

RRRRRR
RAT-TAT
TAT-TAT

THAP

BA BA BA BA BA BA BAM
HI, LOU.
BAM BAM
I'LL SAY HELLO TO YOUR WIFE FOR YOU.


HA HA HA HA HA HA
THIS HAS GOTTA STOP!
THESE BUSINESS PEOPLE--THEY WON'T LOOK THE OTHER WAY FOREVER! YOU THINK WE CAN GET INTO LEGITIMATE MONEY WHILE WE'RE KILLING EACH OTHER IN THE STREETS? WE GOTTA END IT!
ONLY WAY I SEE IS TO KILL HALF-STEP.
THEN KILL HIM! HE WANTS TO RUN THIS BUSINESS BY THE OLD RULES? LET HIM DIE BY THE OLD RULES!
IT'S TIME TO GET RID OF THE PAST, FRANK--ONCE AND FOR ALL!
SURE, JAKE.
SO WHO'S THIS LAMONT CRANSTON, JAKE? DOES HE PLAY BY YOUR NEW RULES?
20

All the players were on the stage. And they were all hitting their marks right on cue.

BRENDA?

BRENDA, WHAT...? WHAT?

BUT WHY, BRENDA? YOU...

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT *COURAGE*. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A *POSITION* THEY HAVE ME IN. YOU...

She told him just what she was supposed to--that she was going to the press with the whole story, and she wanted him to verify it.

He answered like we expected. By not answering.

COURAGE, SWEETIE.

REMEMBER. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE HIM.

THAT SOCIETY CROWD OF YOURS WON'T BE ABLE TO BURY ITS SMELLY SECRETS ANYMORE. AND A *GANG WAR* MAKES IT STICKY EVEN FOR *THIS* CITY GOVERNMENT TO CLOSE ITS EYES.

THOSE THUGS WILL BE CHASED OUT OF THE PACKING BUSINESS. AND YOUR TAO CAN CHOOSE TO HELP US...OR GO DOWN WITH THEM.

NOW. LET'S GET YOU READY FOR YOUR DATE WITH THE BUSHY-TAILED MR HECK.

Yeah, it was all set. I even had the headline for my scoop: CANNED HEIRESS OPENS UP MOB SECRETS.

I was already figuring up my job offers. Tribune, Times, Daily News. It was going to be pretty.

Because nothing, I told myself--nothing could go wrong.

OKAY. BACK TO NEW YORK WHERE I BELONG. AND DAMN PROUD OF IT.

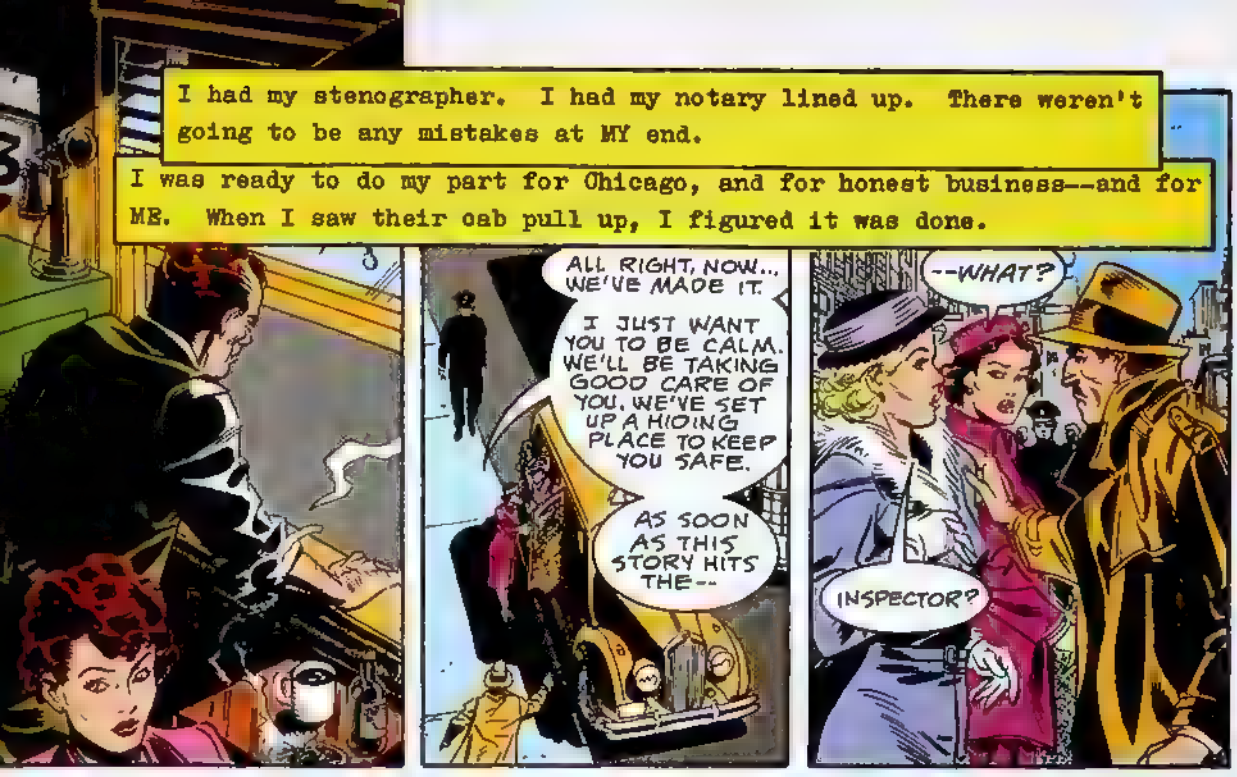
Chicago Herald and Examiner

MOB WAR RAGES

MOB WAR! MOB WAR!
EX-BOOTLEGGERS TOMMY-GUNNED ON STREET!
I'D BE CRAZY TO STAY HERE. I GOT A REPUTATION, I GOT A FUTURE, I--
GIMME ONE O' THOSE, KID.
AW, THEY GOT NOTHING. WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS... WHO'S THIS GUY CRANSTON?
CRANSTON ?!
HE'S SOME KINDA SOCIETY MUG, I TELL YOU.
SCHULTZY BRUCH AND DANNY O'TOOLE. TWO OF THE UGLIEST THUGS IN NEW YORK.
SO WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?
WAY I HEAR IT, HE'S IN WITH GUZIK AND NITTI.
CRANSTON. HERE. HIM AND HIS LITTLE "FRIEND," MARGO LANE.
I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE GUY WAS FISHY. NOW I KNOW IT.
LOOKS LIKE NEW YORK'S GONNA HAVE TO LIVE WITHOUT ME A WHILE!

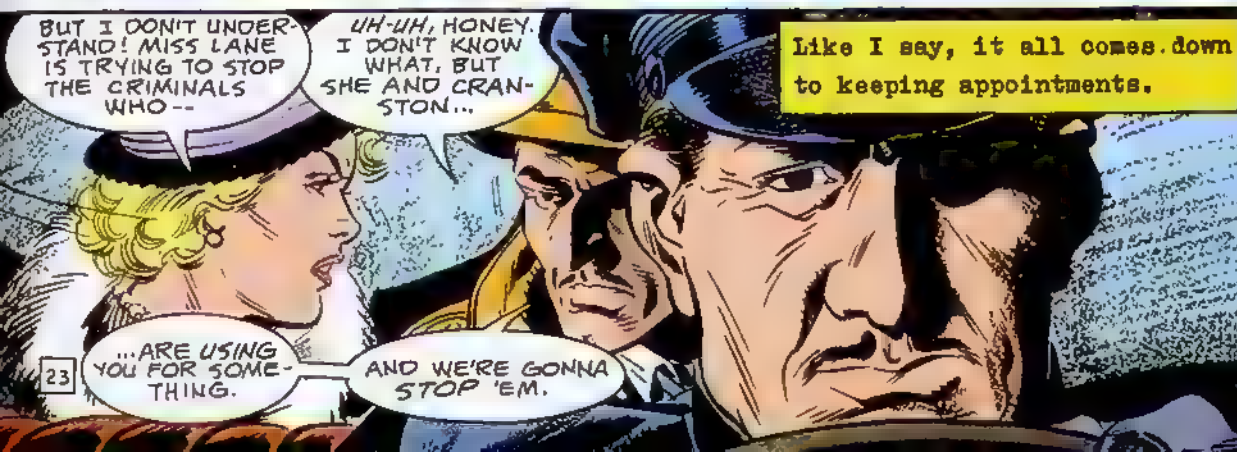
I had my stenographer. I had my notary lined up. There weren't going to be any mistakes at MY end.

I was ready to do my part for Chicago, and for honest business--and for ME. When I saw their cab pull up, I figured it was done.


ALL RIGHT, NOW... WE'VE MADE IT.
I JUST WANT YOU TO BE CALM. WE'LL BE TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOU. WE'VE SET UP A HIDING PLACE TO KEEP YOU SAFE.
AS SOON AS THIS STORY HITS THE--
--WHAT?
INSPECTOR?

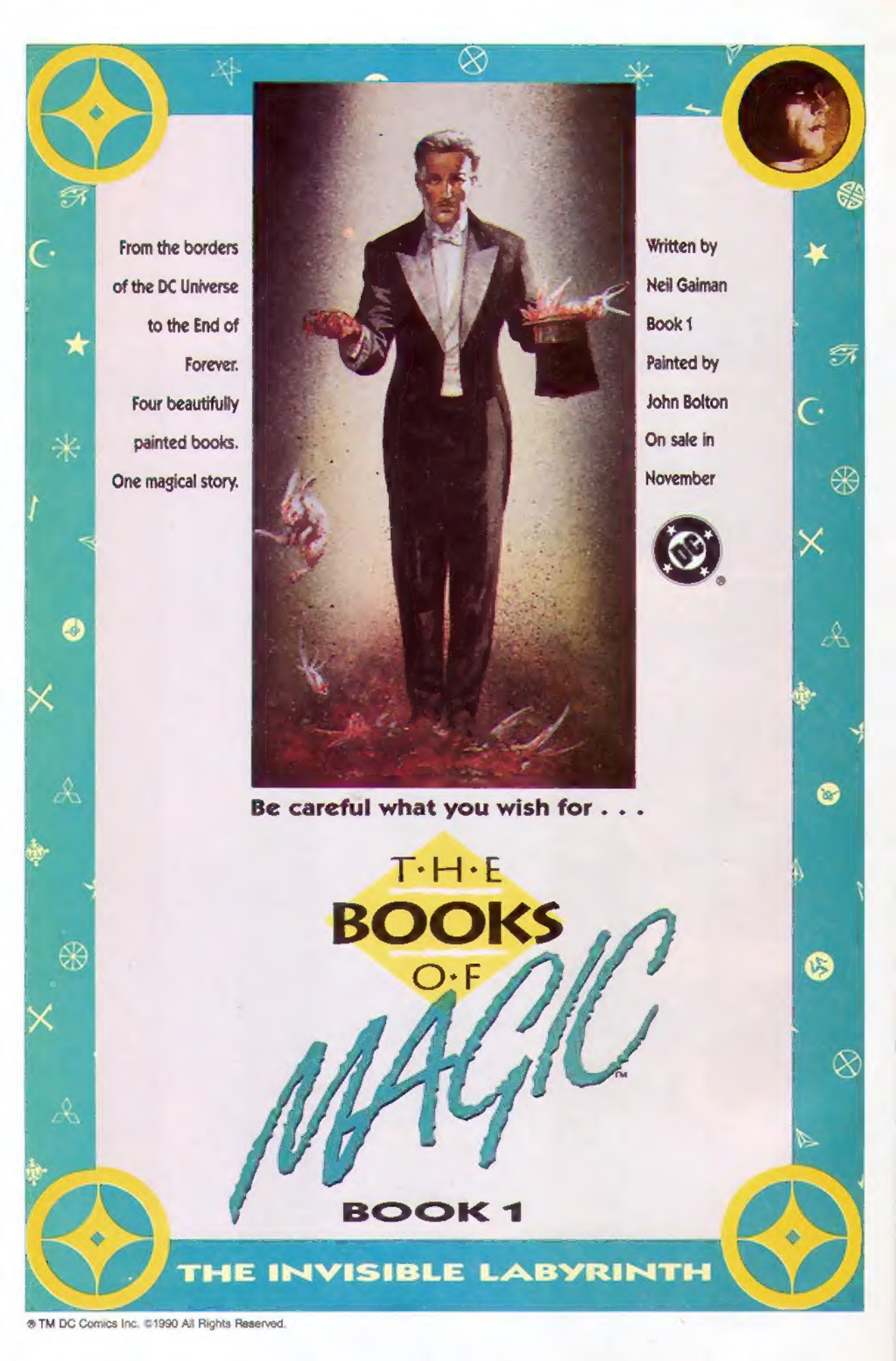
KEEP WALKING. YOUR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT.
CARDONA! WHAT ON EARTH DO YOU--
UNGH!
WHY DON'T YOU LOOK WHERE YOU'RE...
SORRY, SISTER...
...BUT YOU'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

Like I say, it all comes down to keeping appointments.


BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND! MISS LANE IS TRYING TO STOP THE CRIMINALS WHO--
UH-UH, HONEY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT, BUT SHE AND CRANSTON...
...ARE USING YOU FOR SOMETHING.
AND WE'RE GONNA STOP 'EM.

And her date with me wasn't the only one she missed.
But there were other people out there who were keeping their dates.
SBARBARRO
KWOOM
DON'T GUESS! I'VE GOT TO KNOW! IS HE DEAD?
I GOTTA KNOW, DAMN IT! IS SBARBARRO DEAD?

And some who were making new dates.
Which reminds me. I've got that appointment of my own to keep.
You know the one I mean.
The one that nobody ever wants to make, but nobody ever misses.
The one that always comes up a little sooner than you expected.
BURBANK. DISPATCH EVERY AGENT TO CHICAGO. HARRY VINCENT. HAWKEYE. EVERY ONE. AND SEE THAT THEY ARE ARMED.
SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG...
CHICAGO IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE!
NEXT: SLAUGHTERHOUSE



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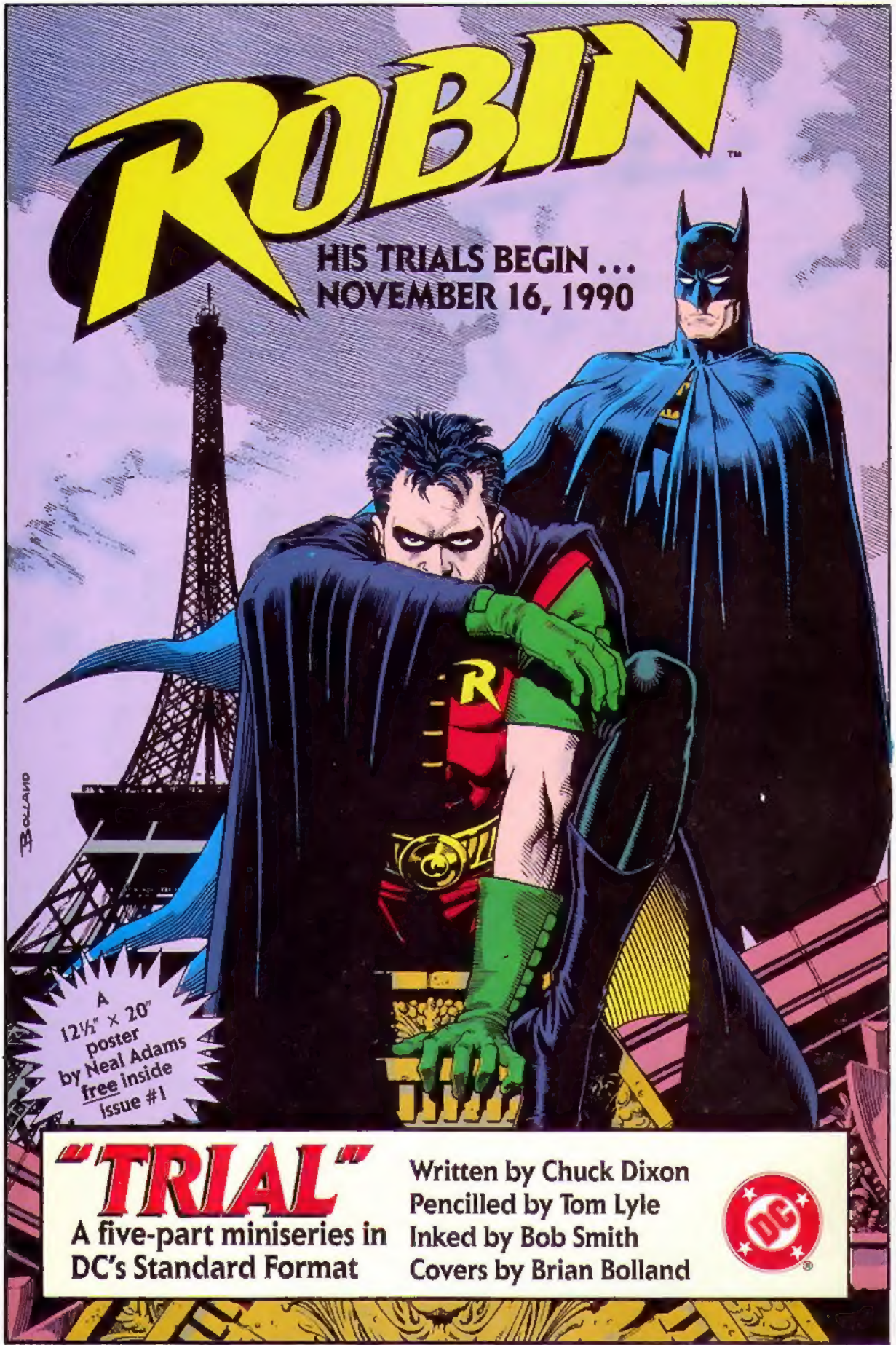
ROBIN
HIS TRIALS BEGIN . . .
NOVEMBER 16, 1990
BOLLAND
A 12½" × 20" poster by Neal Adams free inside issue #1
"TRIAL"
A five-part miniseries in DC's Standard Format
Written by Chuck Dixon
Pencilled by Tom Lyle
Inked by Bob Smith
Covers by Brian Bolland

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BATMAN: BRIDE OF THE DEMON

Rā's al Ghul Will Save the World... Unless Batman Can Stop Him!

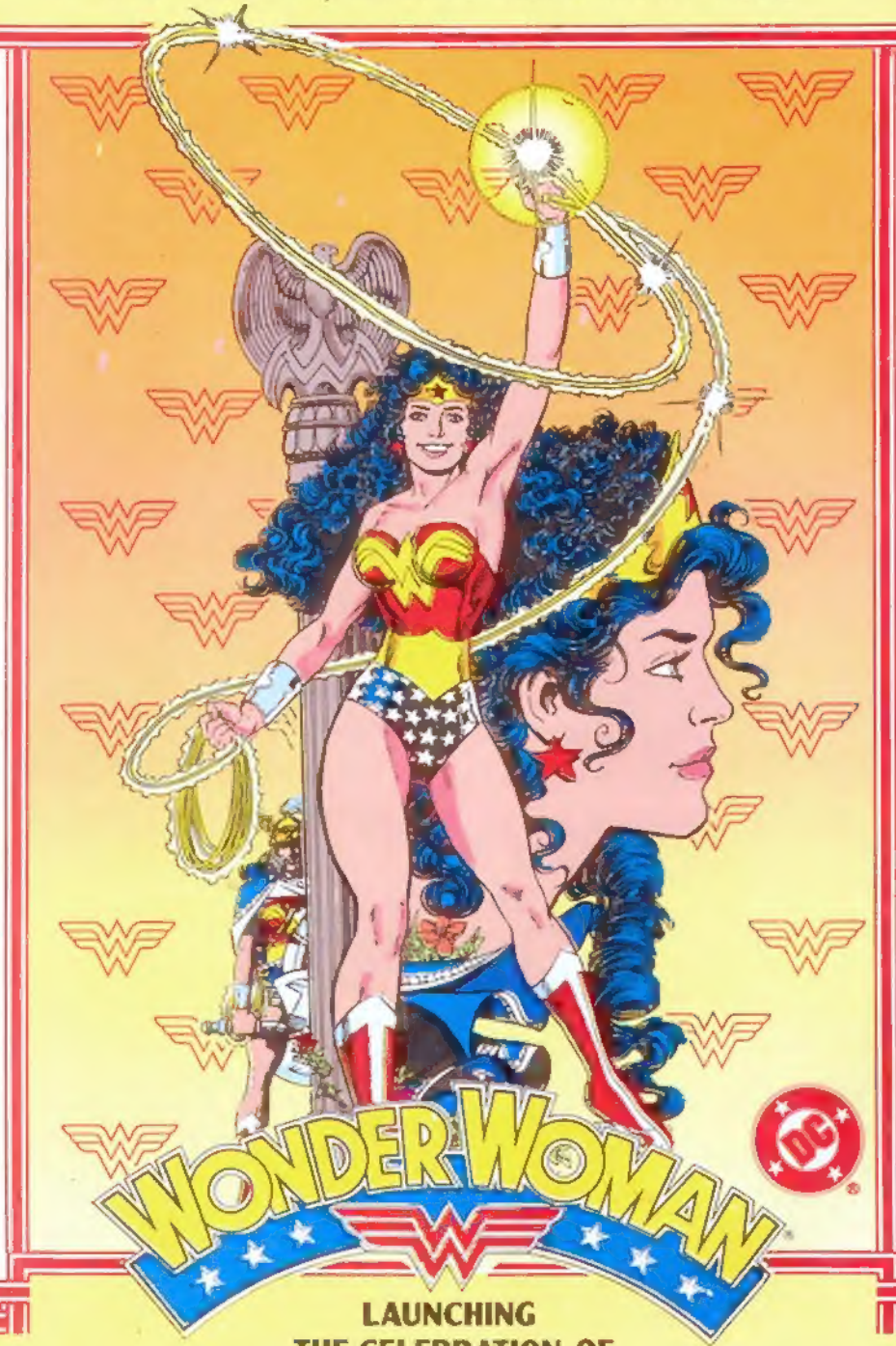
BATMAN: BRIDE OF THE DEMON is the long-awaited sequel to 1987's BATMAN: SON OF THE DEMON hardcover graphic novel.

Written by Mike W. Barr • Art by Tom Grindberg
Colors by Eva Grindberg

A 96-page hardcover graphic novel
from DC Comics Available in December

AMAZONS WALK AMONG US

in this historic, double-sized 50th issue



LAUNCHING
THE CELEBRATION OF
WONDER WOMAN'S 50TH YEAR.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE PÉREZ
PENCILLED BY JILL THOMPSON — INKED BY ROMEO TANGHAL

FEATURING A 10-PAGE PORTFOLIO SECTION BY:

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AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER

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